

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 26/11/12

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Dawson store preferred: Dawson/Burbank's store  
other Burbank's Luncheonette

### 2. Location

street and number 18 and 20 West Montgomery Avenue not for publication  
city, town Rockville vicinity  
county Montgomery

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name 18 West Montgomery Avenue, L.L.C. – c/o Joey Soleiman  
street and number 112 Esworthy Place telephone 301-963-4545/301-580-0737  
city, town North Potomac state MD zip code 20878

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Judicial Center liber 26775 folio 467  
city, town Rockville, MD tax map: GR32 tax parcel: N316 tax ID number 00157947

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☒ Other: Research library at Peerless Rockville

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory 1

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## 7. Description

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered

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### SUMMARY:

Dawson/Burbank's store is a rare vestige of Rockville's late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial streetscape. With the exception of the 1873 B&O Railroad Station, it is Rockville's oldest commercial structure. Modest in scale and massing, with narrow street frontage and simple ornamentation, this functional vernacular structure once fit comfortably into the main street of pre-urban renewal Rockville and is unique in today's urban city center. Although 18-20 West Montgomery Avenue has been altered over its century of use, it remains an emblem of the small town that Rockville was through most of its history.

### DESCRIPTION:

Dawson/Burbank's store faces north on West Montgomery Avenue between Washington and Adams Streets. Constructed for commercial use, it is a simple 1 ½ story frame structure resting on a brick foundation. The building may have originally functioned as one structure that was later divided into two stores, each 16' wide, with the western block 6-8' longer. The main flat roof slopes to the south and is covered by asphalt shingles. The structure is surrounded by an eclectic grouping of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses, the 1939 Post Office, and recent 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial and office buildings. Asphalt and cement parking lots abut the building on the west and south; a third parking lot to the east is separated from the building by a small grassy area that slopes steeply to the south, exposing the store's foundation on that side.

As is typical of many commercial buildings of the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this vernacular structure is largely functional in its exterior and interior features. There is little adornment other than that placed on the north (principal) façade. Although the building has undergone a number of interior and exterior alterations, a few original features remain.

Facing West Montgomery Avenue, the north elevation consists of a painted brick veneer façade with projecting brick piers on the corners and in the center. Extending the full width of the building, the cornice line is formed by a thin cap of metal roofing material; until the fire, the cornice was capped with a wide wooden band. Below the cornice line is a wide stretch of brick that is unadorned and covers the full façade. The eastern portion of this façade shows the vertical tripartite divisions of cornice, upper half story, and storefront. Until very recently, this entrance featured three large multi-light transom windows set above a single door topped by a toothed cornice and flanked by large single-light store windows. The brick along these window and door openings sustained mild fire damage in 2003, the cast metal I-beam that forms a lintel for the tripartite (probably extending across the entire building façade) and the stone sills still show. Recent alterations to this section include replacement of the transom and door with a single light transom and a new double door.

The western portion of the north façade has a cornice established by brick laid in "rowlock" style, a complete course of brick laid on its side, the end of the brick exposed and laid vertical. Two single-light windows, smaller than those on the eastern portion, are located on either side of a centrally located double door, surmounted by a single horizontal window. From the 1970s until the 2003 fire, heavier brick surrounded the windows and doorway, and iron bars were attached for better security. Projecting above the doorway for decades was a commercial sign, the frame probably dating from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the sign face ("Home

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Style – Hot & Cold Food – Burbank’s Restaurant & Carry Out”) from 1985. This sign remained until its recent removal to storage inside the building.

The four-bay east elevation is covered in smooth stucco, while the brick foundation is parged with cement. As described in 1986, the small casement window in the southernmost corner had two four-light windows and the northernmost window retained its original six-over-six sash configuration. The three larger windows had shutters. As of 2008, all except the southernmost window on this façade had been removed and replaced with new windows and wide framing.

The west block of the south (rear) façade includes an extension of the main block that was once a porch, topped with a shed roof and years ago enclosed and covered with vinyl siding. It is supported on brick piers, between which are bricks parged with cement. Facing south from this enclosed porch are two sets of double-hung windows.

The east block of the south (rear) façade was extended some time between 1924 and 1949. The open rear porch was added between 1949 and 1960. (A) In the 1986 description, the rear façade’s three bays included two two-over-two windows and a single wood door at the east end. It had a shed roof covered in asphalt shingles, cinderblock supports, and wood steps leading down to the west and to a basement entrance below; looking into the basement one could see log joists. In 2008, the current owner removed the porch and stairway and shored up this section with cinderblock. During this work a small stone property marker surfaced.

The western elevation is covered in vinyl siding, which may be obscuring a window arrangement much like the eastern elevation. After the 2003 fire, the wood siding (which appeared to be the original German siding) could be seen under sections of the damaged vinyl siding. This was covered up in 2008 with new vinyl siding.

In addition to removal of the rear porch and changing the north and east windows and doors, the current owner’s 2007-8 alterations include replacement of roof flashing and new vinyl beaded siding on the west façade and western half of the south façade.

Dawson/Burbank’s store retains its original scale and massing as well as features such as the tripartite organization and roof line. Most of the changes, made through the years and even recently, are reversible. The structure still reads as a late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial block on the main street of historic Rockville, Maryland.

Note:

A. Sanborn maps, 1924, 1949, and 1960.

## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific construction date 1890

Architect/Builder Thomas Dawson, owner

### SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Dawson/Burbank's store is significant as the last survivor of central Rockville's 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial streetscape. It is the oldest commercial building extant in Rockville, with the exception of the B&O Railroad Station. Begun as a business venture of members of the influential Dawson family, the store has been in continuous use for more than 110 years. Since 1890, the building has been used as a general store, Rockville's post office, a restaurant, and numerous service and sales operations. From the 1960s to 2003, it was known as Burbank's, a luncheonette beloved by locals for its good food and old-fashioned atmosphere.

### HISTORY:

An announcement in *The Montgomery County Sentinel* in September of 1878 promised the opening of Henry A. (known as H.A. or Hal) Dawson's store. "A new firm under the style of H.A. Dawson are [sic] now receiving a large and select stock of goods at their store (Biays' old stand) where in a few days their friends can purchase any article usually found in a well conducted establishment." (1) According to his granddaughter and author of the family history, Hal Dawson (1854-1937) envisioned his future as a prosperous merchant in the small town where he and his family were well known. (2) Rockville was growing fast in the years after the railroad came through, as residents and out-of-town speculators rushed to meet the demand for goods and services. Hal's general store catered to the needs of Rockville residents, stocking food items such as eggs, sugar, molasses, apples, fish, coffee, and household items such as calico, shoes, tobacco, lampshades, candles, and even a plow. (3) However, Dawson was not in business for long. In 1880, his young wife and baby fell ill and died. After trying unsuccessfully to regain his enthusiasm, Hal left town in 1885 to open a store at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in the Dakota Territory and transferred responsibilities of the Rockville store to his brother Thomas.

In 1891, Thomas Dawson (1857-1924) purchased a small section of the western end of lot #22 from Rebecca Fields for \$800. (4) Three days later Rockville's first documented building permit was issued. (5) It is not known whether this was the exact location of H.A. Dawson's 1878 store, but both were in the small corner known to locals as "Quality Hill" (used by the 1850s to describe the area south of Adams Street near Commerce Lane, now West Montgomery Avenue). What is certain is that the Dawsons had a history of entrepreneurship, and that 18-20 West Montgomery is the structure that was erected in 1890.

Thomas Dawson (1857-1924) was one of seven children born to Elizabeth Kiger and Lawrence Dawson. In addition to operating the business opened by his brother Hal, in 1889 Thomas Dawson was appointed Postmaster by President Benjamin Harrison and operated Rockville's post office from the store for the next four years. Thomas studied law, was admitted to the bar in 1894, and immediately began practice in Rockville. From 1897-1904, he served as Clerk of the Circuit Court for Montgomery County. A lifelong Republican, he

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was recognized as a party leader in Maryland. He was on the vestry of Christ Episcopal Church, a trustee of the Rockville Academy, and a director of Farmers' Banking & Trust Company.(6) While actively engaged in the practice of law and senior member of Dawson, Dawson & Welsh, he leased the store to a succession of tenants, including "the Mssrs Frost" in 1895. By 1915, the store had been divided into a duplex, the western half labeled as "meats" and the eastern half occupied by a plumber.(7) Thomas Dawson died in 1924, but his family owned the property until 1933.

At the start of the 1930s, Thomas Dawson still owned the store property and Rebecca Fields still operated *The Montgomery County Sentinel* from the corner of Montgomery Avenue and Washington Street. In 1933, during the Depression, four Dawson siblings lent money, secured by the store property, to John and Helen Stone. In 1935 the Stones conveyed the property to attorney Charles C. Jones, who quickly sold it to Buell and Margaret Gardner. The Gardners owned the property from 1935 to 1969, although for some period Leo Bender and Van Lippard (owner of an auto parts business on Commerce Lane) seem to have ownership status also. During this period, a variety of businesses leased a section of the building; for example, Purdum's Refrigeration Service was on the east side in the 1950s. Margaret Gardner, with Van and Florence Lippard, sold the property in 1969 to West Montgomery Corporation (a group of local real estate investors).(8)

Buell Gardner (1898 -1951) was a Rockville businessman who, succeeded by his wife, owned the subject property from 1935 to 1969. Born on a farm in Warsaw, New York, he served in WWI and came to Rockville in the 1920s. He ran the "Big and Little Shop" with Joe Dawson and later became a realtor, an insurance agent, and an appraiser with an office on East Montgomery Avenue. Active in civic affairs, he served as president of the Rockville Chamber of Commerce and was a Mason, a Presbyterian, and a charter member (1929) and later president (1941-42) of the Rockville Rotary Club. He and Margaret Haslup R.N. married in 1936.(9)

In the 1960s, Perry and Eleanor Burbank operated Burbank's Luncheonette at 20 West Montgomery Avenue. They watched several small restaurants close down or relocate out of Rockville's business district during the Mid-City Urban Renewal project of that decade. When Hence Maynard took over the business in 1970, he kept Burbank's name. Hence and Laura Maynard purchased the property from the West Montgomery Corporation in 1974 for \$27,500 and borrowed funds from the Rockville Cemetery Association "for the purpose of acquiring or carrying on a business." Maynard was prepared to operate a restaurant business. Since coming to Rockville, he had been employed in food service (at S+M Restaurant or Sally's Luncheonette at 257 East Montgomery Avenue and at University Cafeteria) and was for a time vice president of Hatch Paper Co. at 1017 Taft Street. (10)

The Maynard family operated Burbank's Luncheonette as a family business for 33 years, from 1970 through 2003. Hence and Laura Maynard and their children filled the roles of cook, business manager, cashier, and waitress, although particularly in the early years they hired others to operate the restaurant. Burbank's, specializing in homemade food at reasonable prices, opened its doors Monday through Friday from 6:30 am

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until 3 pm.

In 1985 Peerless Rockville recognized the Maynards for operating “a piece of the atmosphere of Old Rockville.” The award noted that Burbank’s was a vestige of Rockville’s old downtown, an all-but-lost social atmosphere. The good food, service, and friendly conversation were much appreciated by a hungry courthouse crowd. Local newspapers described the fare as “good, plain food,” and a columnist was persuaded by a regular customer to include it in her listing of Montgomery County “grit.” Regular patrons included office and construction workers, lawyers and judges, and other locals. As in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most customers arrived at the store on foot.(11)

Through the years the Maynards changed the appearance and improved their usability of the store building. They removed some storefront windows, added an additional brick facing to discourage vandals, installed vinyl siding over the wood, paneled the inside, and reconfigured serving spaces within the restaurant. With Burbank’s in the west half of the building, the east half was leased to small businesses specializing in such services as shoe and leather repair or clothing sales. The Maynards closed the restaurant several times in 1999 and 2000 due to health issues of the owners, but daughter Tina Maynard reopened in 2000 with new paneling, patron tables and chairs, and a smaller counter.

The building has been unoccupied since February of 2003, when a fire was set to cover a homicide at the In Style Consignment Shop, operated in May 2002 by Vanessa Yvette Johnson Sosin in #18. The damage caused the Maynards to close down Burbank’s, and the arson and murder of Mrs. Sosin has never been solved.

In February of 2004, 18 West Montgomery Avenue LLC purchased the property. Since that time, the owner has been considering options, conducting renovation work, and negotiating leases with prospective tenants. During the renovations, one tenant found a box of Dawson papers.

A true survivor, Dawson/Burbank’s store maintains the friendly scale and memory of Rockville’s old business district. As a reminder of the succession of owners in a once-small town who remodeled and reused it to keep up with the times, its period of significance extends from 1890 until 2003.

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Notes:

1. *Montgomery County Sentinel*, September 6, 1878.

2. Gray, Mary Dawson, *Living Through History*, Wellesley, Mass.: Gray Publishing, 2005, p. 141.

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3. Ledger, H.A. Dawson, 1880-81, in the collection of Peerless Rockville.
4. Land Records of Montgomery County, JA25/127 (1891).
5. "A building permit is granted to Thomas Dawson as per application filed and it is ordered that henceforth the ordinance requiring building permits be strictly enforced. The Clerk is directed to have proper forms of applications and permits printed." Minutes of the Mayor and Council, May 26, 1890.  
Despite the 1891 deed from Fields to Dawson – made March 5, 1891, and recorded March 18, 1891 – the *Montgomery County Sentinel* of May 23, 1890 carried this "Local and Personal" column entry: "Mr. Thomas Dawson has purchased a building lot of Mrs. R.G. Fields, on Montgomery Avenue, Rockville, and intends building at once a business house upon it." This being a column of local news (gossip if you will), information about the purchase appears to have been published prematurely.
6. *Montgomery County Sentinel*, October 3, 1924. Obituary of Thomas Dawson.
7. Sanborn-Perris insurance map, 1915.
8. Montgomery County Tax Records, 1930-32; Land Records of Montgomery County, 545/337 (1933), 602/415 (1935), 1126/36 (1948), and 3852/679 (1969). Rockville Chamber of Commerce listing of merchants and businessmen, 1950.
9. *An Informal History of the Rockville Rotary Club, 1929-1984*.
10. Land Records of Montgomery County, 4549/32 (1974) and 4549/36 (1974); email correspondence with Ed Duffy, March 27, 2008; Polk Directories, 1961 and 1968-74.
11. McGuckian, Eileen, "Burbanks offers peek at past," *The Gazette*, October 14, 1987; files of Peerless Rockville.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Cissel, Anne and Dwayne Jones, MHT Site Inventory Form, 1986  
Montgomery County Land, Tax, Will and Equity Records  
Gray, Mary Dawson, *Living Through History*, Wellesley, Mass.: Gray Publishing, 2005  
*The Montgomery County Sentinel*, 1878-1894  
Sanborn-Perris insurance maps, 1897, 1915, 1924, 1949, 1960  
Dawson ledger and newspaper articles in the collections of Peerless Rockville  
National Trust for Historic Preservation, *The Buildings of Main Street – A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, Preservation Press, 1987, p. 54-62.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 0.06463 acres or 2,810 SF  
Acreage of historical setting \_\_\_\_\_  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Parts of lots 21 and 22, on the 1803 plan of Rockville

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## 11. Form Prepared by

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name/title	Eileen McGuckian and Emily Burrows		
organization	Peerless Rockville	date	March 2008
street & number	P.. O. Box 4262	telephone	301.762.0096
city or town	Rockville	state	Maryland

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Department of Planning  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600



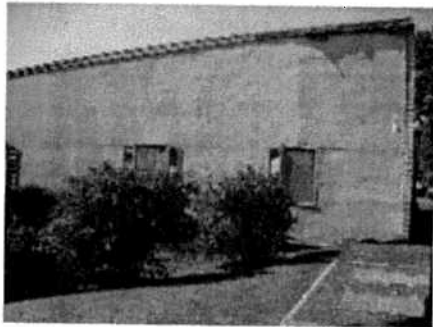
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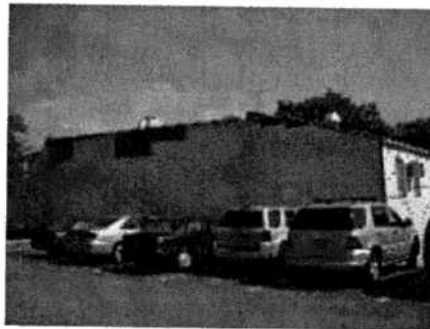
East Elevation 11/07



Façade 11/07



South (rear) Elevation 11/07



West Elevation 11/07



Façade 3/08



South (rear) Elevation, 3/08

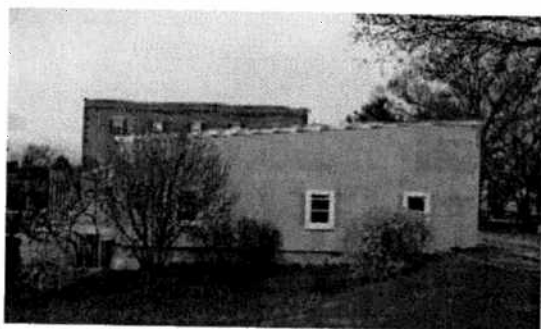
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East Elevation 3/08



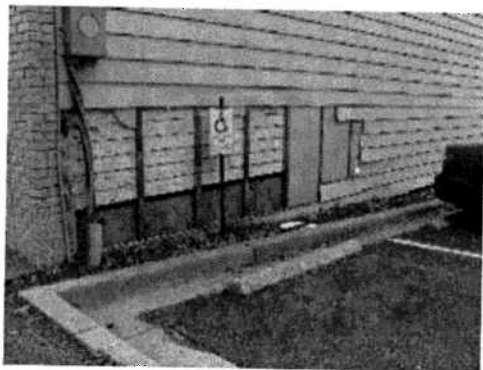
West Elevation 3/08



Façade, 1985



Façade, 2003 fire



West Elevation showing German siding under vinyl  
2006



Northeast Elevation 3/08

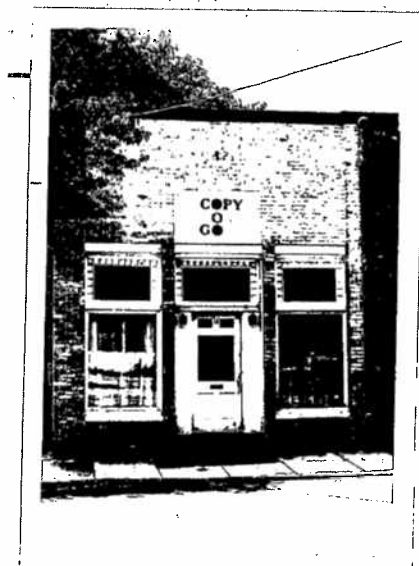
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1976 Rockville Field Survey Form  
Façade, east bay



H. A. (Hal) Dawson, c. 1880  
courtesy Mary Dawson Gray



Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am to 3:00pm  
Phone: 301-934-4350

Menu Cover, 1999-2003